

THE WORD FROM WASHINGTON

Moles

Jeffrey Stein

The chill wind blowing in Washington did not begin with Ronald Reagan's inauguration. There was an early blast about two years ago, when right-wing scholars and journalists, affiliated for the most part with the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, began peddling the notion that the Government was infested with "moles"—American officials recruited long ago by Soviet intelligence.

The talk of "moles" in the Government has simmered down since Reagan entered the White House, but there is reason for concern about a possible recrudescence of McCarthyism. Reagan transition officials said they would take "a close look" at recommendations by the right-wing Heritage Foundation to investigate "subversives," and the Senate reestablished an Internal Security and Terrorism Subcommittee.

"Terrorism" is the key word, of course: It has replaced "communism" as the all-purpose menace which provides the rationale for political repression. A recent piece by syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak illustrated the new shape being given to the old theme of red-baiting. A look at it also allows us to feel what it's like to be on the short end of a witchhunt.

Stephen R. Weissman spent the first weekend of February worrying. He is a quiet, carefully articulate political scientist, thirty-nine years old, with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

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For two years he worked under Democratic Representative Stephen Solarz on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, specializing in U.S. policy toward Africa.

During those years, the Commit-

tee had backed the Carter Administration's sanctions against Rhodesia until a peaceful transition to majority rule was accomplished, had developed legislation prohibiting the CIA from engaging in another secret war in Angola, and had generally looked for ways to carry out a humane and progressive foreign policy divorced from past entanglements with the white supremacists in South Africa.

Late in January, Stephen Weissman received a call from columnist Evans, who inquired about two matters: First, an article by Weissman, "The CIA and U.S. Policy in Zaire and Angola," that had been reprinted in a book called *Dirty Work (II)*, issued by an anti-CIA group in Washington affiliated with former CIA agent and critic Phillip Agee; second, some remarks critical of Zaire that Weissman had made at an academic conference in Philadelphia.

Evans seemed polite, and Weissman explained. First, he said, his article had originally been written expressly for, and printed in, a book of scholarly articles on Southern Africa. It had later been reprinted in the august *Political Science Quarterly*. He had given the editors of *Dirty Work (II)* permission to reprint the piece, as had other authors from the Defense Department and *The New York Times*. Weissman also explained that he had complained to the editors of *Dirty Work (II)* when he found out too late that their book would include an appendix listing the names of hundreds of CIA agents.

As to his remarks at the Philadelphia conference, Weissman told Evans, he had clearly spoken for him-



Mike Konopacki

self on the panel, and his characterization of Zaire as "a basket case" came in the context of a lengthy and scholarly exchange on that country's financial situation. (In any event, as Evans would surely know, Weissman's assessment of Zaire would be shared by the International Monetary Fund.)

During their telephone conversation, Weissman began to suspect that Evans didn't really care about his explanations. When Weissman said a tape recording was available of the Philadelphia meeting, Evans darkly let it be known that he had been briefed by his own source. When Weissman suggested Evans check with an editor to verify his story about his article on Zaire and Angola, Evans took the name, but never called. Over the weekend, Weissman and his wife, Nancy, fretted. Already nervous about the reconstituted Committee's makeup in the new Congress, Weissman wondered about going back to teaching. Jobs were tight, and as he later explained, "a reputation is the only thing you have."

On February 2, *The Washington Post* and some 350 other newspapers across the country printed the Evans and Novak column, "Still Going After the CIA." It tarred Weissman with the *Dirty Work (II)* connection, called him a "symbol" of the anti-CIA "past," and charged he had "used his subcommittee position" at the academic conference to "attack Zaire." To Zaire, Evans grumbled, Weissman appeared to be "a U.S. Government official" trying "to destabilize their country."

With a vote scheduled to decide the subcommittee leadership the following day, Evans was apparently trying to derail the candidacy for chairmanship of Howard Wolpe, a pro-human rights Michigan Democrat, who was backed by Representative Solarz. By tainting Wolpe through Weissman's employment on Solarz's staff, Evans obviously hoped to make them all into security-risk "untouchables."

Fortunately, it didn't work, and Wolpe was elected. The Committee's work will go on, and Evans and Novak will go about their business of promoting political paranoia.

Only Stephen Weissman will remain touched by the incident. He has been trying to get all 350 newspapers

which printed the Evans and Novak column to print a correction; he isn't optimistic, but he's trying. As he said, a reputation is all you've got.

Representative Solarz called the Evans and Novak column "a parody of McCarthyism." Was it a parody? It looked like the real thing. ■

April briefing

Pillow talk. . . Is it possible that *The Washington Post's* early and consistent scoops on Watergate evolved from a wife-swapping ring of CIA officials and prominent Washington journalists? Such is the contention of two former CIA officials, one of whom told me, in exchange for anonymity, that the sex club provided fertile ground for CIA leaks on the story. A book now in preparation, the source says, will show that the CIA deliberately fed the journalists information damaging to Richard M. Nixon through the ever-mysterious Deep Throat.

Stay tuned. . . Radio stations across the country were treated to a toll-free number they could dial to get recorded updates of inaugural events, courtesy of the Reagan committee coordinating the festivities. In soliciting their use of the service, the committee invited the stations to write if they found it useful. In exchange, the committee cheerily noted, a complimentary letter would be put in the station's license renewal file at the Federal Communications Commission.

Just like old times. . . The chief executive of Westchester County, New York, apparently grappling with nuclear accident plans, recently discovered an electronic bug in his office, perpetrators unknown. *The Washington Post* reports, meanwhile, that an employee of the Department of Energy was transferred to a lesser job when she balked at a suggestion by DOE special assistant Armand (Rock) Reyser that she monitor incognito a meeting of environmentalists.

Blind justice. . . Civil liberties defenders are alarmed at the growing prospect that former Maryland Representative and current Prince George's County chief executive Larry Hogan will be named head of the Justice Department's civil rights division. Hogan's police force, said to be infiltrated by members of the Ku Klux Klan, is popularly considered to be the area's most brutal and racist.

Chile dogs. . . Behind the successful push for the new Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security and Terrorism has been the Washington-based "Committee to Restore Internal Security," a group of mostly ex-military and intelligence officers. Its executive director, L. Francis Bouchey, registered as a lobbyist for the Chilean military junta in 1976, but according to a Justice Department suit two years later, was part of a secret effort by General Augusto Pinochet to funnel pro-Chile propaganda through an unregistered front group. FBI sources told me, meanwhile, that the Bureau will work with the new subcommittee to develop "anti-terrorist legislation."

Money bags. . . Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop is seeking to change the 1977 Ethics Law, adopted in part to limit campaign donations to Congressional office slush funds. Wallop, insiders say, wants to amend the law so that solons can take as much as they can get, as long as they declare it. Meanwhile, millions of dollars in "campaign contributions" have flowed into Capitol Hill Republican coffers since the election, according to Common Cause, which will soon issue a book on corporate donations. "It's like betting on a horse after the race," says one expert there.

—J.S.